

# Giant Erla and the Mermaid

Once upon a time there was a Giant named Erla, who lived high in the mountains. He had all the power over the dwarves, the elves and the treasures of the “Salzkammergut”.

One day in spring Erla left his cave in “Traunstein”, the big mountain near Gmunden, in order to enjoy the warming sunshine.

- Traunstein

He sat down at the shore of “Laudachsee”, a small lake between the high tops of the mountains.

- Laudachsee

Soon he noticed that he wasn't alone! A beautiful, young mermaid with bright blond hair swam in the lake! Sometimes she submerged and when she reappeared, she threw a thousand glittering water pearls at Erla!

The giant came to visit Blondchen, the mermaid, every day. Soon they fell in love with each other.

As winter approached, both of them got very sad because they wouldn't be able to see each other for a long time.

So Erla worked out a plan...

He gathered a lot of big rocks and threw them down from the top of “Taunstein” into the big lake at the bottom of the mountain, “Traunsee”.

- Traunsee

Soon an island had built up in the lake. There upon Erla built, with help from all the dwarves and gnomes of the “Salzkammergut” - a beautiful little castle and called it “Schloss Ort”.

- Schloss Ort

Thereafter the witch “Kranawitha” performed some magic in order to shrink Erla and transform Blondchens fish tail into human legs, so that they could live together in the castle.

A big wedding was held and for a long time they lived happily together.

But after some years Blondchen became very sad. She missed her life underwater.

So one day she disappeared in the depths of “Traunsee”.

Erla was so sad about this, that he transformed back into a giant, left “Schloss Ort” and was never to be seen again!

But it is said to be his sleeping, stony face that can be seen in the rocky walls of “Traunstein”.

- Traunstein (Gesicht)

There is also another stony face to be seen if you let your eyes wander over “Traunsee” – the mountain “Schlafende Griechin”, in English the “Sleeping Greek”.

- Schlafende Griechin

Although some say that it lets one think more of the beautiful Egyptian Nefertiti than of a Greek... Anyway!

If you are not too tired yet, we’d like to invite you to join us in our – admittedly a little bit straining – hike up the “Sleeping Greek”, because you really shouldn’t miss the stalactite caves of “Gassel”!

- Gassel Tropfsteinhöhle

Are you brave enough to visit another cave with us? If so, come with us to “Hallstatt” ...

- Hallstatt

... where we can visit the salt mine!

- Salzbergwerk Hallstatt

But be warned: We have to go inside the mountain by “Grubenhund”!

A lot of other “Paradise Nooks” are there to be seen in Gmunden and surroundings, so many, that there isn’t enough time to show you pictures of all of them for the moment being! Just a short preview...

- Offensee

- Langbathsee

- Wildensee

- Almsee

**So we are looking forward to your visit in spring 2016!**